

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a syntactic investigation of tense and aspect in the Chinese language, using Lexicase grammar.

Chinese has long been regarded as a language with no tense, as compared to the well-established tense systems found in many western languages. This study proves that this is a misconception. Using some basic theories provided by Comrie and Reichenbach, together with Starosta's Lexicase theory, this study proves that Chinese does not only have tense, but also a well defined tense system. We have described tense in Chinese as an Extended Absolute-Relative Tense which is developed from Comrie (1985). To illustrate how Chinese tenses can be represented graphically, this study proposes a schematic model that is modified and developed from Reichenbach's model for English tenses.

Aspect in Chinese is found to be interwoven with tense to form a type of Combined Tense/Aspect Opposition as defined by Comrie. Aspect is found at two different syntactic levels in Chinese, the lexical aspect at the simple sentence level and the grammatical aspect at the next higher sentence level. The two levels are indicated by different markers, which are further distinguished according to the perfectivity of the verb and the sentence. This study has also succeeded in providing a schematic representation for aspect, which corresponds to that for tense. Hence, the study not only proves that the grammatical categories of tense and aspect exist in Chinese but also that the categories are combined to form a coherent system.

## ABSTRAK

Disertasi ini merupakan penyelidikan sintaksis mengenai kala dan aspek dalam bahasa Cina, dengan menggunakan Nahu Lexicase.

Bahasa Cina telah lama dianggap sebagai bahasa yang tidak mempunyai kala, apabila dibandingkan dengan sistem-sistem kala mantap yang terdapat dalam banyak bahasa barat. Kajian ini dapat membuktikan bahawa ini adalah tanggapan yang salah. Dengan menggunakan beberapa teori asas yang dikemukakan oleh Comrie dan Reichenbach, bersama dengan teori Lexicase dari Starosta, kajian ini telah membuktikan bahawa bahasa Cina bukan sahaja mempunyai kala, tetapi ia juga mempunyai satu sistem kala yang jelas. Penyelidik telah membuat pemerian kala bahasa Cina sebagai “Extended Absolute-Relative Tense” yang diperkembangkan daripada Comrie (1985). Untuk menunjukkan bagaimana kala boleh digambarkan secara grafik, kajian ini mencadangkan satu skema yang telah dimodifikasikan dan diperkembangkan daripada model Reichenbach untuk nahu bahasa Inggeris.

Aspek dalam bahasa Cina didapati telah menjalinkan dengan kala untuk membentuk sejenis “Combined Tense/Aspect Opposition” seperti yang ditakrifkan oleh Comrie. Aspek wujud pada dua peringkat sintaksis dalam bahasa Cina, iaitu aspek leksikal di peringkat ayat selapis dan aspek nahu di peringkat ayat kompleks. Kedua-dua peringkat ini ditandakan dengan penanda yang berlainan, yang boleh dibezakan lagi berdasarkan perfektiviti katakerja dan ayat berkenaan. Kajian ini juga telah berjaya untuk membekalkan gambaran skema untuk aspek, yang secocok dengan

gambaran skema bagi kala. Oleh demikian, kajian ini dapat membuktikan bukan sahaja bahawa kala dan aspek wujud dalam bahasa Cina tetapi juga bahawa kategori-kategori tersebut digabungkan untuk membentuk satu sistem yang koheren.

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